

NORWICH PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes

Thursday, July 23, 2015, Tracy Hall

Regular Meeting

Members Present: Goodrich, Lubell, LaRowe, Allen, Brink

Members Absent: Brien, Horwitz

Clerk: Phil Dechert **Others:**

Jeff Goodrich, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

1. **Agenda** – “Sullivan Farm” Conservation Easement added after #3
2. **Election of Officers** – Jeff Goodrich elected Chair 4-0 (Goodrich abstained)
Susan Brink elected Vice-Chair 4-0 (Brink abstained)
3. **Comments from the Public** - None
4. **Minutes** – 6-11-15 Approved without changes

5. “Sullivan Farm” Conservation Easement –

Nancy LaRowe recused herself from the Commission for this item. However she did provide information on the details of the project during the discussion based on her involvement in the transaction.

The UVLT is applying for funding through the VHCB to protect the Sullivan Farm Property at the intersection of Town Farm Road and Goodrich Four Corners Road, (south of Town Farm Road and east of Goodrich Four Corners Road). The UVLT is requesting letters of support from the Town of Norwich seeking confirmation that the project is consistent with the town plan and voicing support for the project. The members reviewed a draft letter of support prepared by the Clerk and discussed the project. The long term plan is for Hogwash Farm (Nancy LaRowe) to purchase the Sullivan Farm Property at agricultural value after the sale of the conservation easement by Sullivan to UVLT.

Brink moved to send the letter of support to UVLT. The motion was seconded by Allen and passed 4-0 (LaRowe recused). The Clerk will send a final draft to members for comment.

6. Route 5 South/River Road Study -

In reviewing the “Recommendations” in the Study, the follow issues were discussed:

- “Complete Streets” designs should provide for vehicles, bikes, and pedestrians at an appropriate compact scale and not result in wide boulevards.
- Building heights should not be increased beyond the current 35’ in the near future.
- What specific changes can be made to create opportunities for affordable housing with small changes? Densities, building types?
- Focus on area west of RT 5 South and the Cook property on River Road (both RR zoning now) for potential zoning changes for higher density and mixed-use.
- Septic capacity will always be a hurdle.
- Need to better understand of the economics of affordable housing.
- Form based codes may not work with affordable housing density bonuses.
- Better understanding of changing demographics. Regional statistics may not help.

Discussion on Recommendations will continue at next meeting. Members may submit questions and issues for discussion before the next meeting.

7. Zoning Regulation Revisions - Flood Hazard & River Corridor Regulations

The members requested the Clerk to continue re-drafting the Flood Hazard & River Corridor Regulations and bring drafts back to the Commission. The consensus was to focus on River Corridor issues and the impact of the mapping options – fluvial erosion studies vs. state meander zones and setbacks. Dechert suggested that with either system, waivers based on expert analysis should be available to landowners.

8. Adjournment 8:23 PM.

Phil Dechert, Clerk

APPROVED 9/10/15

Future Meetings: August 13, 2015 7 PM Regular Meeting

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